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Relating to God Helps for Relating



Introduction

Getting to know a friend is not a difficult thing to do. It requires time together, a sharing of information and a sharing of experiences. As you talk and listen to a friend, you gain insights and understanding about that person. Having a relationship with God involves the same type of interchange.

Because God is not visibly present, relating to Him is a bit different than relating to a friend. The intent of this study is to understand the tools that God has provided for developing our relationship with Him.

God's Desire for Relationship

In a stirring rebuke to the Laodicean church Jesus lays out their sin of being neither cold nor hot. Then He offers this stunning invitation:

'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Revelation 3:20

- Underline the reference to the one who is initiating the invitation.
- Circle those things that Jesus will do with the one answering the knock.
- Draw a box around the actions that one must take to benefit from the invitation.

Jesus is a gentleman. Just as He did not force His way into your heart, neither will He force you into a relationship. He persistently waits for you to invite Him into your circle of friends.

But don't be misled. It is not as if Jesus has no visibility into your life. Someone outside your house, standing at the door cannot see in. But Jesus is not simply waiting for you to come. Consider Psalms 14.

The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

Psalms 14:2

- Circle the name of the one who is doing the seeking.
- Underline the words that describe the kind of person for whom search is being made.

Jesus is actively looking for someone just like you to develop a deep and satisfying relationship.

God establishes some guidelines for those who want to draw near to him. It makes sense that God would want to provide guidelines for those coming into His presence. Consider the following verse.

God began his relationship with Man when He made Adam. He and Adam had fellowship and relationship. Read Genesis 2-3 to discover those instances where God and Adam related.

This verse is normally used to describe the act of becoming a Christian. But the context is truly an invitation to believers to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus.



Jeremiah 29:13
Deuteronomy 4:29

Why do you think God is looking for those who are seeking Him?

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6

- Underline the essential ingredient required for pleasing God.
- Circle the essential requirements for those who come to God.

When a person comes to God, faith must be involved. Faith is simply trusting. And notice the things that God wants us to believe: that He exists; and that He rewards those who come to Him.

Helps for Relationship

It's one thing to know that God wants to have a relationship with you and another thing to know how to go about relating to Him. God has given us all of the tools we need for having effective communication with Him.

His Word

The Bible is a unique book. It claims to be God's Words. It reveals to us what God is like. Everything you need to know about God is contained in The Bible. Those who want to know him must search for Him in its pages.

¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

- Underline the one who inspired those writing Scripture.
- Circle the words which indicate the ways one profits from Scripture
- The word "Inspired" comes from the Greek word *theopneustos* which means "God breathed". It is as if the words of scripture are fresh on His lips.
- Draw a box around the phrase that describes the effect of the Scripture on the man of God.
- The word "adequate" comes from the Greek word *artios*, which means, "perfect or fitted". It implies complete and perfect adequacy for the work.

His word reveals not only His desires but also His promises. Knowing what He promises to do is a key to understanding what He is like.

³...His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

2 Peter 1:3-4

- Circle the words that Peter uses to describe the promises of God
- Underline the effect that the promises of God can have upon you.

God treasures our faith. It is the quality that makes Him happy. All of the deeds and activities that one might try as a means of gaining His approval fail if they are not accompanied by faith.

You can find out more about the faith life in the Foundational Discipleship study series in the Christian Character section.

God's Word is profitable for . . .

- > Teaching – explaining something new
- > Reproof – identifying error
- > Correction – providing truth to faulty actions
- > Training – re-enforcing past convictions

When someone is a partaker, they become a partner or sharer in that which is partaken. In this case, the right application of God's promises allow you to become like Him

Men in Jesus' day knew the value of Scripture for revealing the things of God.

"You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me;

John 5:39

- Underline the tool they used for finding eternal life
- Circle the phrase that describes who the Scriptures speak about.

If someone looks carefully he will discover that the central figure of the Bible is Jesus Christ. The Old Testament looks forward to him and the New Testament describes the benefits of trusting in Him.

While Jesus is the central figure of the Bible, the Holy Spirit is without doubt the one inspiring its words.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit plays a unique role in helping us relate to God. Jesus described the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John.

¹³But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you.

John 16:13-14

- Underline into what the Holy Spirit will guide.
- Circle the things the Holy Spirit will say.
- Draw a box around the things the Holy Spirit will disclose.

The Holy Spirit is foremost a teacher. He is intent on revealing the things of God to those who love God. Some further insights into the Holy Spirit's capabilities are contained in the Book of 1 Corinthians.

⁹ but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him." ¹⁰For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God,

1 Corinthians 2:9-12

- In verse 10, underline that which is searched by the Spirit.
- In verse 11, circle the one who knows the thoughts of God
- In verse 12, underline why God has given us the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus walked the Road to Emmaus after his death, he relayed to two disciples verse by verse the things relating to him. See Luke 24:13-32

You can learn more about the Holy Spirit in two other Studies:

- > **vDRC** Getting Started 4, Assured of a Changed Life
- > **vDRC** Relating to God 2, God's Nature

Not only does the Holy Spirit reveal truth about God. He also reveals truth about each person.

- > **What did David pray in Psalms 139:23-24?**
- > **What did John say the Holy Spirit would do in John 16:8**

Based upon the information in 1 Corinthians 2, place a check (✓) by the statement that is true

- Nothing is hidden from the Spirit of God.
- God uses the Holy Spirit to reveal truth about Himself to believers.
- A person who does not have the Spirit of God can know the thoughts of God by praying for insight.
- The reason God gave us the Holy Spirit is because He wants us to Know Him.

In the space below, summarize briefly how the Holy Spirit helps us relate to God.

Prayer

Prayer has a different usefulness when compared with either God's Word or the Holy Spirit. God's Word is a medium of revelation. It is God speaking to whoever will hear. The Holy Spirit also reveals truth as a result of His presence in our life. Prayer, on the other hand, has to do with requests that we make to God. Prayer is our tool to appeal to God and let Him know of our desire to know him. It is our tool of inquiry and response.

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

James 1:5

- Underline the quality for which we are encouraged to ask.
- Circle the promised result.
- *Wisdom is an essential ingredient in the life of one seeking to know God.*

God promises to reveal himself to those who ask. Underline the ways God will respond to prayer according to the following verses.

'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

Jeremiah 33:3

¹²*Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart ¹⁴And I will be found by you.*

Jeremiah 29:12-14

⁶*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:6-7

Romans 8 is Paul's masterful discussion of the Spirit-Filled Life. In verses 26 and 27 Paul relates that the Holy Spirit prays for us according to the will of God. He not only reveals God's nature to us but also petitions the Father on our behalf!

Relationship is a two-way affair

God allows us the privilege of prayer as a means of communicating our desires to Him.

There is something about our asking that pleases God. For those desiring to relate to Him, God tells us to ask for the relationship. Prayer is the unique means we have to make such request known,

There are obstacles that can impede God’s response to our prayers. Circle the things that keep prayer from having its effect according to the following verses

If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear;
Psalms 66:18

¹Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. ²But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear.

Isaiah 59:1-2

⁶But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,

James 1:6-7

God grants what we ask when we ask according to the guidelines he has established.

What do you think?

1. Based upon this study, what evidence can you offer to support the claim that God wants to have a relationship with you?

2. Describe some ways in which God’s Word can be helpful in building a relationship with God.

3. Explain the role that the Holy Spirit has in helping your relationship with God.

4. What are some promises of relationship that God has made to those who pray?

It is not enough just to know the right answers. Follow the admonition in James 1:22.

Use the truth in 2 timothy 3:16 as a means of applying God's Word:

- > Is there some new **teaching** for me to obey?
- > Is there some practice to be stopped as a result of **reproof**?
- > Is there something being done wrong which I need to **correct**?
- > Is the some habit I need to adopt to receive **training in righteousness**?